

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

23 DEC 1982

Mr. S. Dillon Ripley
Secretary
Smithsonian Institution Building
Room 205
1000 Jefferson Drive, SW
Washington, DC 20560

Dear Mr. Ripley,

As you may be aware, our mutual friend Vincent Melzac has for many years been sharing his extensive collection of modern American art with this Agency, lending us many large canvasses for display in the main concourse of our Headquarters building. Bluhm, Downing, Mehring, Davis, and Thomas are among the many artists represented in our borrowed display, and most recently he has lent us two important paintings by Morris Louis and a statue by Georgio Spaventa. In recognition of his unique support for CIA, Vincent was honored in a brief ceremony here last Friday, when the DCI presented him with the Agency Seal Medallion, suitably inscribed to reflect our appreciation.

Vincent mentioned, after the presentation, that the Medallion would join the award he had previously received from the Smithsonian, and of which he is clearly very proud. The observation led to a discussion of other matters involving him and your Institution, and this letter is an outgrowth of that discussion.

Our Commission is planning an exhibition of bronze sculptures by Vincent's young protege, Marc Mellon. The show is to be held in April, and will feature miniatures of athletes from the Melzac collection. We are aware, of course, of Mellon's portrait work as well, and are particularly interested in the bust of Vice President, and former DCI, George Bush which has been offered to the National Portrait Gallery. We think it would considerably enhance our Mellon show if we could include the Bush portrait, which would be of particular interest to the employees of the Agency he once headed.

From earlier discussions with members of the staff at the National Museum of American Art, I know there are restrictions on the loan of holdings from the NMAA to organizations which cannot put the borrowed items on open public display. (While our exhibits are open to all our employees and are seen by many official visitors, we are unable, for obvious security reasons, to open our building to the public at large.) I do not know if similar restrictions apply to the National Portrait Gallery, but hope that, if the bust becomes a part of that collection, the unique situation created by Mr. Bush's past relationship with us could become the basis for an exception.

I would be most grateful if you would refer this matter to someone on your staff with whom I might discuss arrangements for including the bust in our exhibition of Mellon's work. I can be reached at CIA [REDACTED]

My thanks in advance for your assistance. I hope you have a most pleasant holiday season.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Bruce T. Johnson
Chairman, Fine Arts Commission

cc: Mr. Vincent Melzac

CH/FAC:BTJohnson:jtr [REDACTED] (23 December 1982)

Distribution:

Orig - Addressee
1 - Mr. Melzac
1 - DDA
1 - [REDACTED], OL/LSD
① - FAC Files

BRUCE T. JOHNSON

DIRECTOR OF DATA PROCESSING

18/19

FORWARDED
20 DEC 1982
To DDA

Harry - pls see attached
note and accompanying
letter.

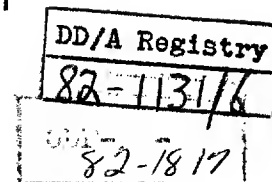
D/ODP

Bruce

Bruce,

Looks ok to me and
suggest you sign it.

Harry



19 December 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: memo to DDA

Note to the DDA from Chairman, FAC:

Harry, the attached letter is self-explanatory, and is an outgrowth of discussions with Melzac after the award ceremony on Friday. He was anxious to have Bush and Ripley know about his award, and [redacted] offered to get word through Don Gregg to the VP. [redacted] later confirmed to me that he had done so.) And I volunteered to write to Ripley, having a second motive for doing so. Contact with the Smithsonian could benefit our FAC program, and of course we have a specific requirement to borrow the Bush portrait bust if indeed it is to become part of the Smithsonian collection. (You will recall that the National Portrait Gallery, like the National Collection of American Art, is a part of the Smithsonian.) Given Ripley's position, however, you may prefer to have the letter come from you, with a reference in the last para. to me as the Chairman, FAC and your action officer for such matters. Let me know your preference, and we will put the letter in final form.

[redacted]

Bruce T. Johnson

STAT